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Bipartisan Criticism . . . By Roscoe Drummond

The Fulbright Speech

A NEW FORM of bipartisanism in foreign policy is breaking out in Washington—bipartisan criticism of long-held Administration attitudes. It is beginning to raise more than eyebrows at the White House.

Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, Sen. Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon and most of the other Republican presidential candidates have been focusing upon U.S. difficulties abroad and for several weeks have been chipping away at U.S. policy—with no great effect.

But now five leading Democratic Senators—Ernest Gruening of Alaska, Frank Church of Idaho, Wayne Morse of Oregon, and Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, as well as William Fulbright of Arkansas, chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee—are all criticizing the Administration's conduct of foreign affairs as unrealistic, ill-conceived or badly executed. The effect of these speeches is to inject foreign policy at Democratic initiative into the oncoming presidential elections.

I SEE NOTHING wrong with that. A presidential campaign is the most effective instrument we have for public education. This

can be a healthy debate—and a clarifying one. It is the best way to get a national consensus.

One of the arresting aspects of this bipartisan criticism of foreign policy is that most of the Republican critics support the Johnson Administration objectives but criticize execution, while most Democratic critics dissent from some of the President's main objectives.

Nixon, Goldwater, Rockefeller and Pennsylvania's Gov. William W. Scranton all support the presence of U.S. forces in Viet-Nam, favor doing more.

Gruening, Morse, Church and with some qualifications Mansfield would like to see us get out of Viet-Nam.

The Republicans think that the presence of a Moscow-dominated, Communist regime in Cuba is intolerable and that we ought not to relax our efforts to help the Cubans recover their right to have a government by consent of the governed.

The Democratic chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee thinks that the continuance of a Soviet satellite regime in Cuba is quite tolerable and that we should relax efforts to unseat Castro.

At this stage at least, this Democratic criticism of Johnson Administration foreign policy—which was also Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy foreign policy—is

far more fundamental than the Republican criticism.

THOUGH I deeply dissent from the proposition that we should relax our pressure on Castro, it seems to me that Sen. Fulbright has, on other points, delivered a timely and usefully provocative speech. He is absolutely right on his two central themes:

1. That, with Peking and Moscow tearing the Communist world apart, the Russians may well find it in their national interest to mute the cold war and work more cooperatively with the West.

2. That it would be unwise for the United States to remain so locked into its past thinking that it threw away the chance to explore and respond to the opportunities that new developments in the Communist world may offer.

"If we are willing," says Sen. Fulbright, "to re-examine the view that all Communist regimes are alike in their threat which they pose for the West—a view which had a certain validity in Stalin's time—then we may be able to exert an important influence on the course of events within a divided Communist world."

This is sound. It reflects developments now in the making though not yet firmly established. It is good to have Sen. Fulbright stirring up the policy-makers—and the country.

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